



Plane Talk



February 2004

167th Airlift Wing, WVANG

Next UTAs 6-7 March

167th AW 2004 “Airmen of the Year”

All selected as West Virginia ANG “Airmen of the Year”



Senior Amn. Timothy J. Merrill

Senior Airman Timothy J. Merrill of the 167th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Traffic Management Section, was named 167th Airman of the Year, E-1 to E-4 category. He was subsequently named as the State Airman of the Year for the same category.

Merrill was also selected as the recipient of the J. Kemp McLaughlin Trophy, given annually to the top airman overall in the State of West Virginia.

Merrill's military career began when he enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve in July 1996. After graduating basic training at New Orleans, La., he was assigned as a supply clerk and did several annual training sessions at Pearl Harbor Naval Station, Hawaii.

He received an associate's degree in hospitality management from Allegheny Community College in 1998, and

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Tech. Sgt. Kerry M. Anderson

Tech. Sgt. Kerry M. Anderson of the 167th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Transportation Section, was named 167th Airman of the Year, E-5 to E-6 category. He was subsequently named as the State Airman of the Year for the same category.

Anderson's military career began when he enlisted in the active duty Air Force in August 1983, completing basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, that December. He graduated the Security Police Technical School in February 1984 and was assigned to Moody AFB, Valdosta, Ga. He later cross-trained as a refueling maintenance mechanic in October 1987.

After being honorably discharged from active duty September 1989, he joined the 167th as a traditional guardsman that November. He was hired as a

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Master Sgt. Robert E. Sadler

Master Sgt. Robert E. Sadler of the 167th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Base Supply, was named 167th Airman of the Year, E-7 to E-9 category. He was subsequently named as the State Airman of the Year for the same category.

He enlisted in the active duty U.S. Air Force in July 1982 and was assigned as a fuels specialist to the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, Va., until October 1984. He joined the 167th as a traditional guardsman in November 1984 in the Fuels Section of Base Supply.

Sadler worked as a temporary technician in the Fuels Section from 1987 to 1989 until he was selected as a full-time Supply specialist in Civil Engineering. In May 1991, he was selected as supply clerk in the Repair Cycle Section in Base Supply, later becoming a mater-

continued on page 8.

Mountaineer Pride Worldwide

New Law Protects Service Members

A new law replacing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 provides service members greater protections to handle personal financial and legal obligations. The focus of the new act is the same as under the SSCRA — to provide protections to service members who have difficulty meeting their personal financial and legal obligations because of their military service.

Those on long-term deployments, or called to active duty, should not have to worry about families being evicted from their quarters without sufficient legal protections, or that they are paying on a leased car or apartment that they cannot use, or about civil legal proceedings they cannot attend because of their deployment.

For more information, see the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006329>.

Be Leery Of Fraud, Theft

Credit card fraud and identity theft are things to be leery of. Even so, oftentimes people do not think they can become a victim. But either can ruin the victim's credit line for years. The most common way is for a thief to get an individual's social security number and other personal data and then opens lines of credit with credit-card companies, department stores and other credit-lending institutions. Some thieves will have fake identification made using the personal information.

For more information, go to www.idtheftcenter.org.

PLANE TALK is an authorized Air Force publication for the members of the 167th Airlift Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard. Contents of **PLANE TALK** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is prepared, edited and provided by the Public Affairs Office, 167th AW, WVANG, Martinsburg, WV 25401-0204. Email comments to PA.167AW@WVMART.ANG.AF.MIL

Col. Eric Vollmecke	Wing Commander
Col. William R. Gain	Air Commander
2Lt. Andrew Schmidt	PAO
Master Sgt. Ronald K. Newcomer	PA Specialist
Senior Amn. Steven E. Rau	Admin



CHAPTER NEWS

By Chaplain (Capt.) David Reynolds

Consider the Ant

The Bible refers to this creature as small but wise. (Proverbs 30:24) Never mind the havoc ants can create at a picnic or untidy kitchen table. Ants are indeed ingenious. My youngest son recently shared the following story about ants:

It seems a nature-loving professor thought he would try an experiment involving ants. He bet a fellow professor he could make a trap that a colony of ants could not penetrate. On a Sunday night the experiment got underway at his vacation cottage. First, he placed a large wooden tub on the kitchen floor, filling it to three-fourths its capacity with water. Next, he placed a wooden stand in the middle of the tub. On top of the stand a saucer with four pieces of candy were used as bait. Finally, around the tub a very slow-drying gooey glue-like substance was painted. With the trap set, the professors departed for an entire week. What they found when they returned was eye opening to say the least!

As anticipated, ants were drawn to the trap. However, these tiny creatures were undaunted by the immenseness of the obstacles. Single files of ants marched headlong into the gooey substance. They became "martyrs" for the colony. A handful embedded themselves end to end becoming a causeway for the remaining ants.

The water in the tub was especially challenging to the land loving ants. With round the clock perseverance and courage, worker ants brought tiny shreds of grass, slivers of wood and other tiny objects and with their own saliva "glued" a highway bridge that spanned from tub to table (stool). Once the leg of the stool was bridged, the traffic was almost all one way toward the chocolate reward. Needless to say, the tiny ants outsmarted the tenured professor. The result? He lost his bet!

I'll bet your wondering what ants have to do with you. Life has a way of handing some pretty demanding obstacles. The tasks before us can sometimes tower over us. How are we ever going to finish this on time? How are we ever going to get through this? My resources seem so small in comparison to the project. **Consider the ants.** Together they "pooled" their abilities. By patiently engaging their resources they made a way where their seemed to be no way. Sacrifice, hard work and perseverance paid off. Together the "tiny team" outwitted not only the tenured teacher but also the towering table. It's amazing what can be done when our efforts are combined and our energies are focused on the goal before us.

When obstacles and challenges come, remember you are never alone. God is always there ready to help you patiently bare your burden and He strategically places fellow followers in our pathway to assist you.

Public Environmental Hearing to Held at Army Guard Armory

All Unit Members Encouraged to Attend Public Hearing Relating to C-5 Transition.

Public hearings will be held Feb. 17 and 19 at the 157th Army National Guard Armory, 157th Military Police Company, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. in reference to upcoming construction on base related to the C-5 transition. The meetings will provide a forum for interested parties to provide written or verbal comments on the draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and the potential closure of runway 17/35.

The public period for opinions relating to these issues closes March 7, 2004. All comments will become part of the official record, and all base members are strongly encouraged to attend and make their feelings known.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd announced April 9, 2002, that the 167th was chosen as the new home for 10 C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft, slated to arrive on base in 2007. The move would require a \$200 million upgrade to base facilities, including new hangers and an extension of the runway to around 8,000 feet. The aircraft transfer will also require an increase in part-time and full-time personnel on base, the senator said.

"This decision ensures that the Martinsburg Air National Guard will continue in its vital mission to support active duty American military forces around the world. With this selection, the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg will have a new and more dynamic role in our nation's armed forces," Byrd said.

The transfer of the planes to the wing will guarantee its long-term relevance as a provider of global airlift services and will ensure that the Eastern Regional Airport will be a catalyst for future growth in the area, Byrd said.

"There will be a positive economic impact for the unit and community as well as an increase in the number of full-time employees on base," said Col. William Gain, 167th Air Commander. "If the hearings go well, we should be turning dirt in July 2004."

Written comments and requests for documents can be mailed to: Martinsburg EIS, ANG/CE VP, Attention: Lt. Col. T.J. Mitnik, 3500 Fetchet Avenue, Andrews Air Force Base, Md., 20762. Copies of the EIS are available at local public libraries, the 157th Armory and the 167th Airlift Wing website at <http://www.wvmart.ang.af.mil>.

Worth Repeating

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

President Theodore Roosevelt

167th AW Promotions



TO MAJOR

Audie K. Sanders **AW**



TO CAPTAIN

Lisa M. Bishop **AES**
Stephen D. Sigler **MDS**



TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT

Larissa D. Green **AS**



TO STAFF SERGEANT

Timothy J. Merrill **LRS**
Delphia H. Rogers **LRS**



TO SENIOR AIRMAN

Jason M. Chambers **SFS**
Robert W. Estes **SVF**
Zachary D. Fay **MXS**
Joshua T. Feagley **LRS**
Rachel M. Feagley **LRS**
Andrew M. Fream **LRS**
Christopher M. Leonard **AMXS**
Michael T. Lindamood II **APS**
Chad W. May **SFS**
James C. Runk **MXS**
Matthew C. Shade **MXS**
Ronnie E. Shaffer **MXS**
Daniel R. Wean **AMXS**

Welcome to the 167th Airlift Wing

Alleena M. Burke	MXS
Abraham Galvan	AES
Russell L. Hanson	SFS
Karen A. Jones	SPTG
Michael S. Morris	OSF
Trista L. Pavelski	AES
Douglas A. Ridley	LRS
Lucas B. Ruppenthal	CES
Christopher S. Sheldon	AMXS
Clyde E. Showe III	AES
Barrie R. Teter	LRS

African-American History Month

Brown v. Board of Education

*Landmark Decision for the Civil Rights Movement
Occurred 50 Years Ago*

In the early 1950's, racial segregation in public schools was the norm across America. Although all the schools in a given district were supposed to be equal, most black schools were far inferior to their white counterparts.

In Topeka, Kansas, a black third-grader named Linda Brown had to walk one mile through a railroad switchyard to get to her black elementary school, even though a white elementary school was only seven blocks away. Linda's father, Oliver Brown, tried to enroll her in the white elementary school, but the principal of the school refused. Brown went to McKinley Burnett, the head of Topeka's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and asked for help. The NAACP was eager to assist the Browns, as it had long wanted to challenge segregation in public schools. With Brown's complaint, it had "the right plaintiff at the right time."

Other black parents joined Brown and, in 1951, the NAACP requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools. The U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas heard Brown's case June 25-26, 1951. At the trial, the NAACP argued that segregated schools sent the message to black children that they were inferior to whites; therefore, the schools were inherently unequal. One of the expert witnesses, Dr. Hugh W. Speer, testified, "If the colored children are denied the experience in school of associating with white children, who represent 90 percent of our national society in which these colored children must live, then the colored child's curriculum is being greatly curtailed. The Topeka curriculum or any school curriculum cannot be equal under segregation."

The Board of Education's defense was that, because segregation in Topeka and elsewhere pervaded many other aspects of life, segregated schools simply prepared black children for the segregation they would face during adulthood. The board also argued that segregated schools were not necessarily harmful to black children; great African Americans such as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver had overcome more than just segregated schools to achieve what they achieved.

The request for an injunction put the court in a difficult decision. On the one hand, the judges agreed with the expert witnesses; in their decision, they wrote: "Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental ef-

fect upon the colored children ... A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn."

On the other hand, the precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* allowed separate but equal school systems for blacks and whites, and no Supreme Court ruling had overturned *Plessy* yet. Because of the precedent of *Plessy*, the court felt "compelled" to rule in favor of the Board of Education.

Brown and the NAACP appealed to the Supreme Court on Oct. 1, 1951, and their case was combined with other cases that challenged school segregation in South Carolina, Virginia and Delaware. The Supreme Court first heard the case on Dec. 9, 1952, but failed to reach a decision. In the reargument, heard from Dec. 7-8, 1953, the Court requested that both sides discuss "the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868." The reargument shed very little additional light on the issue. The Court had to make its decision based not on whether or not the authors of the Fourteenth Amendment had desegregated schools in mind when they wrote the amendment in 1868, but based on whether or not desegregated schools deprived black children of equal protection of the law when the case was decided, in 1954.

On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren read the decision of the unanimous Court: "We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race,



even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does ... We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment."

The Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy* for public education, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and required the desegregation of schools across America.

The Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision did not abolish segregation in other public areas, such as restaurants and restrooms, nor did it require desegregation of public schools by a specific time. It did, however, declare the permissive or mandatory segregation that existed in 21 states unconstitutional. It was a giant step toward complete desegregation of public schools. Even partial desegregation of these schools, however, was still very far away, as would soon become apparent.

(Article by Lisa Cozzins at <http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory>)

Que Pasa!

Logistics Readiness Squadron – 2nd Lt. Chris Croson

Several troops from LRS along with others from Mission Support Group returned from a cross-training trip at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, on Jan. 24. MSG personnel received exceptional acknowledgments from Hawaii ANG staff for their devotion and hard work. It was a great opportunity to observe how other ANG units operate as well as providing a sense of accomplishment for assisting the HIANC in preparing for their ORI. Lt. Col. Molinaro, LRS Commander for the 154th HIANC, enthusiastically said that the 167th has an open invitation to come back anytime.

LRS is pleased to have our Motor Pool personnel return from two training trips at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and Ft. Dicks, NJ. Brown, Grim, Johnson, Runkles and Wood spent a total of 12 days in January and February working closely with Army personnel. Keep up the hard work!

Additionally, LRS congratulates Staff Sgt. Delphia Rogers on her recent promotion to the NCO ranks.

In conclusion, 2004 will be a challenging year for all ANG personnel. Be safe, stay focused and remember why we are here.

Maintenance Squadron – Maj. Robert Barrat, Tech. Sgt. Sam Rickabaugh

Congrats to Airman 1st Class Zachary Faye, who scored 94 percent on his tech school examination as an aerospace propulsion apprentice in the turboshaft /turboprop engine class, and to Staff Sgt. Benjamin Hardy from AGE shop, who scored a 92 percent on his 7-level CDC examination.

The results of the Most Spiffy UTA Uniform for February are in: Chief Master Sgt. Bart Kough wins the NCO division; 1st Lt. Eric Widmeyer wins the officer division in heavy competition.

In the “atta-boy” department: Airmen 1st Class Kyle Umphries, Zachary Faye, Christopher Leonard, Daniel Wean and Matthew Shade are all welcomed back to Martinsburg from their successful completion of Air Force Basic Training. They can cut back on doing their push-ups and excessive floor buffing now that they have returned to our base.

In the baby department: Senior Master Sgt. Robert “Bob” Meadows has become a grandfather for the third time, welcoming his granddaughter. Chief Master Sgt. Dave Widmeyer is a new grandfather, welcoming his granddaughter, who was born Oct. 5, 2003. Chief Master Sgt. Steven Lam

has recently been seen driving around base in a beautiful brand new GMC Envoy, his baby, with all the bells and whistles.

In the safety department, it almost goes without saying to do your best to drive carefully in this challenging winter weather. Road ice and black ice seems to be everywhere during these freezing nights where there is plenty of daytime standing water, and during a skid is the one time the driver has almost no control over the vehicle and where it goes.

And in the economy department, there are a few tips you may wish to keep in mind as gasoline nears the \$2 per gallon mark: cars can warm up on the road; don’t let your car warm up in the driveway idling before your trip starts. Keep your tires inflated properly and don’t carry around unnecessary items in the trunk or back seat to keep vehicle weight down. Most cars get their best mileage at the 45-mile-per-hour range and do better with the windows rolled up to make the car more aerodynamic. Gradual acceleration also saves fuel. Try to combine errands to avoid extra trips, and carpool whenever possible.

Chief Master Sgt. Helmick Retires



Chief Master Sgt. Steven L. Helmick of the 167th Communication Squadron was presented with the Air Force Commendation and West Virginia Commendation Medals by Col. Pat Burkhart at a ceremony held on base in January. Helmick retired last month as chief of information systems with 35 years, eight months of military service, all with the 167th.



USSERA Job Protections

Five-Year Cap on USSERA Job Protections for Traditional Guardsman Does Not Apply to Terrorist Attack Deployments.

By now, all traditional guardsmen should know that there are federal regulations in place to protect their civilian jobs if they get deployed. However, many don't realize that there is a five-year limit on the cumulative total of military service that an employer is required by law to support.

Not all military days count toward this five-year limit, however. **Time spent on activation in response to terrorist attacks does not count toward the five-year reemployment rights listed in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994.**

USERRA, enacted October 1994 and significantly updated in 1996 and 1998, provides job protection and rights of reinstatement to employees who participate in the National Guard and Reserve.

The following is a list of frequently asked questions regarding USERRA. The information is taken from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve web page at <http://www.esgr.org>:

1. Is an employee protected from unlawful discrimination by an employer due to military affiliation?

Yes. The USERRA provides protections for initial hiring and adverse employment actions by an employer if the actions are motivated, even in part, by the employee's military service. This protection also extends to witnesses who assist or testify in a USERRA investigation.

2. What are the basic eligibility requirements for job protection under USERRA?

To be protected, a National Guard or Reserve member *must have a civilian job*, must *provide timely notification* to the employer of military duty, and must *report back to work* for reemployment in a timely manner. Reemployment rights are provided even if the civilian job is described as "temporary," unless the employment was for a brief period with no reasonable expectation of continuance for a significant period of time.

3. Is there a limit to the amount of active duty an employee can perform and still have reemployment rights?

Yes, there is a 5-year cumulative total of military service an employer is required to support. Not included in that total are: inactive duty training (drills); annual training; involuntary recall to or retention on active duty; voluntary or involuntary active duty in support of a war, national emergency, or certain operational missions; or additional training

requirements determined and certified in writing by the Service Secretary, and considered to be necessary for professional development or for completion of skill training or retraining.

4. Does USERRA apply to "state" military duty or governor call-ups of National Guard members?

No. However, protection for such duty is generally provided by state statutes and in most instances is comparable to protections provided under the USERRA.

5. When should an employee provide notification of upcoming duty?

Written or oral notification must be made to employers *prior to going on duty*, unless precluded by military necessity. Employees are highly encouraged to notify their employer of any "window" of anticipated military activity, when application for orders is made, or if notified of possible involuntary recall.

Employees should be sensitive to employer scheduling requirements when providing notification and when submitting application to the unit commander for orders. Where possible, an employee should submit requests for orders during calendar periods outside of peak business seasons and not during the most popular vacation cycles.

6. Does an employee have reinstatement rights following voluntary military service?

Yes. There is no longer any differentiation between voluntary and involuntary orders under the USERRA, so long as the basic eligibility requirements are met.

7. What if an employee does not return in a timely manner to work?

The employee is *subject to the personnel policies* and practices of the employer for unexcused absences.

8. How does military service affect employee status or seniority in the workplace?

An employee must be considered *not to have been absent* from the workplace if the only reason for that absence was service in a uniformed service. A returning employee must be made "whole" by 1. being *allowed to contribute to the pension plan* any amount that would have been contributed had the employee not been absent, 2. being *reinstated with privileges and status* the employee earned by length of service (for example, after

3 years with a company an employee may be entitled to accrue more vacation per year, or after 5 years an employee is automatically advanced to a management position.)

9. What are the rules for entitlement to health insurance?

For absence of less than 30 days, benefits continue as continued on page 9.



167th Member Publishes War Novel



Master Sgt. Tom Young with his new novel.

West Virginia Air National Guard member Thomas W. Young has published a new novel, based very loosely on actual events in the war on drugs in Latin America.

"Trash-Hauler's Ball — A Tale of Modern War" centers around the crew of a C-130 Hercules transport plane. The book was inspired by Master Sgt. Young's experiences as a flight engineer with the 167th Airlift Wing. In civilian life, the author is a pilot with Atlantic Coast Airlines.

Young joined the 167th in December 1998 after transferring from the 135th AW in Baltimore, Md. He has 12 years' military service overall.

The novel follows an American aircrew as events draw them deeper into the fight against narcoterrorism, eventually culminating with a search for a downed pilot.

"Trash-Hauler's Ball" is available online at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other online booksellers. In addition, it can be ordered from Aventine Press through any bookstore. The ISBN number, often helpful when ordering through stores, is 1-59330-119-7.

The author received B.A. and M.A. degrees in mass communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1983 and 1986. While at UNC, he also completed the university's Creative Writing program.

Young was a long-time writer and editor for the broadcast division of the Associated Press in Washington, D.C.

His interest in flying eventually led to a career change and a job with Atlantic Coast Airlines/United Express. Young is a first officer on the Canadair Regional Jet, based at Dulles International Airport near Washington.

"I hope the book does justice to some of the fine folks I've known in the armed forces," said Young. "My goal was to give readers some idea of what military people deal with, day in, day out."

Young lives with his wife in Alexandria, Va.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Beightol)



TRICARE Standard Allows Civilian Care

People covered by the TRICARE Standard military health care plan no longer need approval from their military treatment facility to seek inpatient care at civilian hospitals. The need to get a nonavailability statement before seeking civilian inpatient care expired Dec. 28 under a provision of the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act.

Before seeking care at a civilian facility, military health system officials urge beneficiaries to check with their nearby military treatment facility to compare services and ask questions.

For more information, see the Air Force Print News story at

<http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006443> or go to www.tricare.osd.mil.

GAO Upholds TRICARE Pharmacy Award to Express Scripts Inc.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has upheld the award of the TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Contract (TRRX) to Express Scripts Inc. (ESI) of Maryland Heights, Mo., according to a Jan. 12 Department of Defense announcement. The TRRX contract is for a pharmacy benefits manager to provide a nationwide network of retail pharmacies to fill prescriptions for TRICARE beneficiaries in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The GAO review was prompted by protests filed by four of the losing bidders: ACS State Healthcare LLC, PharmaCare Government Services Inc., PBGA LLC, and Humana Military Healthcare Services Inc.

The new contract is designed to improve service and satisfaction for TRICARE beneficiaries and substantially reduce the cost of the benefit to the American taxpayer. DoD will implement the new contract in 2004 as a key part of the transformation of the military health system. The DoD and the outgoing and incoming contractors will take every measure to assure uniformed services beneficiaries of a seamless transition of the retail pharmacy and all other healthcare benefits. For more information, see http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/TRRx_Contract_upheld.htm.

To learn more about TRICARE, visit our TRICARE Overview page at <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,30822—1,00.html>

Front Page Continued...

Senior Amn Merrill...

transferred to the West Virginia Air National Guard in October 2001. Graduating second in his class from the 13-week Traffic Management School at Lackland AFB, Texas, Merrill returned to the 167th Traffic Management Section on active duty status until September 2002.

He volunteered for a 40-day deployment to Dover AFB, La., to augment the cargo section there, which was tasked heavily in support of upcoming missions in Southwest Asia. Immediately upon his return, he left for a two-week deployment to Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia, in support of the unit's AEF requirement.

At the request of the 363rd Expeditionary Transportation Squadron at Prince Sultan, AB, he volunteered for five months to support heavy mission requirements for Operation Iraqi Freedom. While there, he was recognized as Airman of the Quarter for exceptional performance and was presented with the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

After returning to the 167th in May 2003, Merrill volunteered as an augmentee for Security Forces to enforce and enhance the Wing's security objectives during a time of limited resources. During this time, he completed his 5-level CDC course and enrolled in Airman Leadership School's five-week in-residence program, which he successfully completed Nov. 14, 2003. There, he was recognized by the CRTIC's Commander for his outstanding efforts and his volunteering to assist with the unit's Family Readiness Group.

Merrill and his wife live in Frostburg, Md.

Tech. Sgt. Anderson...

fulltime AGR transportation mechanic in June 2002, and currently serves as a special purpose vehicle supervisor and full-time technician.

Anderson has graduated numerous military courses, including the 7-level base vehicle supervisor course. He is currently enrolled in Course 6, and completed his first test May 2003.

Of special note is Anderson's Air Force Achievement Award, which he received for saving a boy from drowning.

He and his wife and sons live in Bunkerhill, W.Va., and are active in their community through church and sports.

Master Sgt. Sadler...

-ial handler in the Mobility Section. He accepted his current position as equipment management supervisor in April 2000.

He has numerous overseas deployments including two separate deployments to Qatar, in 2002 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and again in 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he received the 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's "Support Person of the Month" award in recognition of his outstanding logistical support and exemplary performance as First Sergeant.

Sadler is a generous and faithful contributor to his com-

munity, church, family and the 167th Airlift Wing. He volunteers extensively for his church, Johnstown Bible Church, serving in numerous leadership roles. He has been close affiliated with the West Virginia Enlisted Association, where he served as vice president of the chapter. Other organizations that he supports includes the Maryland Theater Association, the National Rifle Association, Hospice of the Eastern Panhandle, Disabled Veterans Association, the Eastern Panhandle Training Center for the mentally impaired, the Hedgesville Volunteer Firefighter building program and the Shelter for Abused Children.

He lives with his wife and children in Hedgesville, W.Va.



Five 167th Airlift Wing members participated in the VA Medical Center's "Veterans Day Road to Freedom 5K run." Pictured above, from left, are Master Sgt. Timothy J. Gates, Command Post; Tech. Sgt. Larry E. Carper, Aerial Port Squadron; Master Sgt. Charles M. Leonard, Aerial Port Squadron; Chief Master Sgt. (Retired) Steven L. Helmick, Communications Flight; and Technical Sgt. Ruth A. Grubb, JAG Office.

Retirements

Airlift Wing

Col. Jesse A. Thomas Jan 13

Security Forces Squadron

Master Sgt. Kelly S. Smith Jan. 13

Aerial Port Squadron

Maj. Jeffrey M. Davids Jan. 5

Communications Flight

Chief Master Sgt. Steven L. Helmick Jan. 31

Airlift Squadron

Staff Sgt. Michael E. Schramm Jan. 29

VA Gets Record Budget for FY 2004

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will receive a record budget of \$64 billion for the current fiscal year, up \$4.2 billion from the previous spending level. The budget for fiscal year 2004, which began Oct. 1, 2003, comes as VA is putting the finishing touches on the administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2005, which will be formally unveiled today. Among the major items in fiscal year 2004 budget are \$28.4 billion (including \$1.7 billion in collections) for health care, up \$2.9 billion from the previous year, and \$32.8 billion in benefits programs. Other budgetary categories include:

- \$143.4 million for the National Cemetery Administration, an \$11 million hike over last year, plus nearly \$32 million in grants for state cemeteries;
- Full funding to expedite the handling of veterans' claims for disability compensation and pensions – a total of \$1 billion for all programs;
- Nearly \$176 million for health care and other programs to assist homeless veterans, an increase of over \$22 million from fiscal year 2003;
- \$101 million to support state extended-care facilities, \$3 million more than last year; and
- \$522 million for construction, plus the authority to transfer another \$400 million to health care construction.

Medical Priority For Disabled Vets

Veterans with service-connected medical problems will go to the front of the line when it comes to receiving medical treatment at Veterans Affairs facilities. VA officials issued a new directive to all VA medical facilities requiring that priority access be given to qualifying veterans seeking appointments for treatment. The directive covers hospitalization and outpatient care, and does not apply to veterans seeking care for medical problems not related to a service-connected disability.

Priority access means that when qualifying veterans come to a VA treatment facility for inpatient or outpatient care, they will receive an appointment within 30 days. If a VA facility is unable to schedule an appointment within the 30-day time limit, an appointment must be arranged for care at another VA facility or at a facility under contract in the private sector.

For more information, see the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006344>.

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if the employee has not been absent. For absence of 31 days or more, coverage stops unless the employee elects to pay for COBRA-like coverage (for a period of up to 18 months). *Health insurance must be reinstated* the day an employee is reinstated with no waiting period. If the employer cannot put the employee back to work immediately upon application, the health insurance must be restored immediately.

10. Does an employee accrue vacation or medical/sick days from the employer while on military leave of absence?

No. However, as in the previous question, an employer may choose to offer accrual of vacation or medical/sick days as an additional benefit. An employer is not required under USERRA to provide short-term compensation (pay, vacation accrual, etc.) when an employee is not working at the worksite.

11. Does an employee have the right to make up periods of work missed due to drill or military leave of absence?

No. An employer may choose to offer an employee the opportunity to work hours missed as a benefit not provided under the USERRA. For example, an employer is not required to provide hours of work for an average 2-week, 80-hour period if part of that period is missed due to military service.

12. After completion of weekend drill, what is the time limit for an employee to return to work?

The beginning of the *next regularly scheduled work period on the first full day following completion of service and expiration of an 8-hour rest period following safe transportation home*. For example, an employer cannot require a service member who returns home at 10 p.m. to report to work 2.5 hours later at 12:30 a.m. However, the employer can require the employee to report for the 6 a.m. shift, or scheduled work period, the next morning (after reasonable commute from military duty to home followed by 8-hours). Included in the 8 hour period is time for rest and the commute to work.

13. What if the employee has an accident, is delayed by lack of military transportation, or is otherwise unable to report back in a timely manner?

The employee must report back to work *as soon as possible*. Unless the delay is through no fault of the employee, he or she is subject to the personnel policies and practices the employer would normally apply to employees with unexcused absences.

14. What if an employee is injured or incurs a disability during military duty?

The deadline for reinstatement may be extended for *up to 2 years* for persons who are convalescing due to a disability incurred or aggravated during military service, and employers must make reasonable accommodations for the impairment.



Safety Notes

CPSC Warns Of Hazards from Heaters and Fireplaces

Recent Fire Deaths and Carbon Monoxide Poisonings Prompt Government Safety Alert. Since this winter began, a 13-year-old girl in Fairmount Heights, Md., and a 33-year-old woman in Kansas City, Kan., died in fires ignited by electric space heaters. Three children, ages 4, 5, and 9, from Rome, N.Y., died in a fire in which bedding was pushed up against a heater. Two girls, ages 7 and 4, from Walden, N.Y., died in a fire associated with a "wood pellet" stove and a mother and son from Long Island died when their fireplace sparked a fire in the basement. Four adults and five children in Seattle, Wash., all suffered carbon monoxide poisoning when they brought a charcoal-burning hibachi inside.

During this season, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is aware of at least 51 deaths from fires started by heaters and fireplaces. The CPSC reminds consumers to follow safety precautions when purchasing and using electric or fuel-fired heaters and fireplaces.

"CPSC has worked with industry to improve safety standards for heaters, but consumers must exercise care in how they use heaters and fireplaces," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "Every home needs working smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide alarm."

In a recent year, there were about 10,900 residential fires and about 190 deaths associated with portable or fixed local heaters. There were 15,500 fires and 40 deaths associated with fireplaces and chimneys. And there were about 100 deaths from carbon monoxide from heating systems, ranges/ovens, and water heaters.

Heaters can cause fires if they are placed too close to flammable materials such as drapes, furniture, or bedding. Fireplaces can cause fires if the chimney is cracked, blocked, or coated with creosote, or if sparks and embers can reach flammable materials. Fuel-burning appliances can cause carbon monoxide poisoning if there is improper venting or incomplete combustion.

Additional space heater safety tips include:

* Choose a heater that has been tested to the latest safety standards and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. These heaters will have the most up-to-date safety features, while older space heaters may not meet the newer safety standards. CPSC worked to upgrade industry

standards for electric, kerosene, and vented and unvented gas space heaters. An automatic cut-off device is now required to turn off electric or kerosene heaters if they tip over. More guarding around the heating coils of electric heaters and the burner of kerosene heaters also is required to prevent fires.

* Place the heater on a level, hard and nonflammable surface, not on rugs or carpets or near bedding or drapes. Keep the heater at least three feet from bedding, drapes, furniture, or other flammable materials.

* Keep doors open to the rest of the house if you are using an unvented fuel-burning space heater. This helps prevent pollutant build-up and promotes proper combustion. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to provide sufficient combustion air to prevent carbon monoxide production.

*Never leave a space heater on when you go to sleep. Never place a space heater close to any sleeping person.

*Turn the space heater off if you leave the area. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

*Do not use a kitchen range or oven to heat your house because it could overheat or generate carbon monoxide.

*Have a smoke alarm with fresh batteries on each level of the house and inside every bedroom. In addition, have a carbon monoxide alarm outside the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area.

*Be aware that mobile homes require specially designed heating equipment. Only electric or vented fuel-fired equipment should be used.

*Have gas and kerosene space heaters inspected annually to ensure proper operation.

Fireplace safety tips:

*Have flues and chimneys inspected before each heating season for leakage and blockage by creosote or debris.

*Open the fireplace damper before lighting the fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. This will avert the building up of poisonous gases, especially while the family is sleeping.

*Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other fuel to light or relight a fire because the vapors can explode. Never keep flammable fuels or materials near a fire.

*Keep a screen or glass enclosure around a fireplace to prevent sparks or embers from igniting flammable materials.

Consumers who would like more information can view "What You Should Know about Space Heaters" at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/463.html>, or receive this free CPSC booklet by sending a postcard to "Space Heater Booklet," CPSC, Washington, DC 20207.



Government Travel Charge Card Scam

All Government Travel Charge cardholders should be alerted that during the past week, there have been several reports of external fraudulent activity targeted toward or affecting the government's charge card program. You are advised of the following:

- * Do not give out account information in response to a fraudulent e-mail claiming to be sent from Visa officials, stating that cardholders have to

"reactivate" their accounts due to a "technical security update." The e-mail directs the user to click a link that appears to be the Visa Website, but is actually a fake "mirror" site. Entering personal information into that site could result in identity theft. Note that no one from Visa banks will ever call or e-mail a cardholder and ask for an account number or other personal information. Thus far, this action has targeted government travel cardholders. Cardholders should report any attempts to your Agency Program Coordinator (APC) and to the bank (800 number on the back of the credit card) as soon as they occur.

- * Information warns of a potential scam whereas unknown callers falsely identify themselves as bank employees working with the government charge card program. The scam operators claim to be checking suspicious card activity and may ask for account numbers, social security numbers, and other personal information. Be aware that bank employees would not take these actions. The APCs should be the only persons requesting this type of information.



The Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003

Nov. 11, 2003, President Bush signed into law the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003. Among its provisions are these tax breaks related to military personnel:

- * Death benefits - The death gratuity paid to survivors of deceased Armed Forces members rises to \$12,000 and is not taxable (was \$6,000, with \$3,000 tax-free).

- * Sale of principal residence - A taxpayer on qualified official extended duty in the U.S. Armed Services or the Foreign Service may suspend for up to 10 years of such duty time the running of the 5-year ownership-and-use period before the sale of a residence.

- * Deduction for overnight travel expenses of National Guard and Reserve members - Reservists who stay overnight more than 100 miles away from home while in service (e.g., for

a drill or meeting) may deduct unreimbursed travel expenses (transportation, meals and lodging) as an above-the-line deduction.

- * Dept. of Defense Homeowners Assistance Program Payments made after Nov. 11, 2003, under this program to offset the adverse effects on housing values of military base realignments or closures will be excludable from income as a fringe benefit.

- * Combat zone extensions expanded to contingency operations - The various extensions granted to combat zone participants to file returns or pay taxes will also apply to those serving in Contingency Operations, as designated by the Secretary of Defense.

- * Dependent care assistance programs - Clarifies that dependent care assistance programs for military personnel are excludable benefits.

- * Military academy attendees - The ten percent tax on payments from a Qualified Tuition Program or Coverdell Education Savings Account that are not used for educational expenses does not apply to attendees of the U.S. Military, Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard or Merchant Marine Academies, to the extent the payments do not exceed the costs of advanced education.

To learn about each tax break, see <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,40316—,00.html>

Camera Phones - Security Risk

New cellular phones with integral digital cameras pose an unacceptable security risk, according to National Security Agency officials. This type of phone is not authorized for use or possession within any Air Force facility processing classified information.

If a phone with a camera capability is discovered in a secure area, it will be confiscated for review of unlawful images. Anyone seeing someone using any unauthorized camera without coordinating with base agencies should contact the base security forces squadron.

For more information, see the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123006445>.

On This Day In History...

Feb. 10, 1908 - The Wright Brothers sign the first Army airplane contract.

Feb. 1, 1959 — The Air Force acquires the first general-purpose computer, Univac I.

Feb. 22, 1978 — The Air Force successfully launches the NAVSTAR Global Positioning System.

Feb. 28, 1994 — Two F-16s shoot down four Serb Galeb fighters in NATO's first combat engagement.

Feb. 3, 1995 — Lt. Col. Eileen Collins becomes the first woman to pilot the space shuttle Discovery.

JOHN LARSSON
General

LT. COL. JOHN PALIN
Divisional Commander



PHILIP D. NEEDHAM
Territorial Commander

CAPTAIN RAYMOND N. PRUITT
MAJOR CRYSTAL PRUITT
Corps Officers

The Salvation Army

FOUNDED IN 1865 BY WILLIAM BOOTH

505 VIRGINIA AVENUE

MAIL: POST OFFICE BOX 1679

MARTINSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA 25402

(304) 267-4612 • FAX (304) 267-2562

January 13, 2004

Colonel William Gain
167th Air Lift Wing
222 Sabre Jet Blvd.
Martinsburg WV 25401

RE: CHRISTMAS DONATION 2003

Dear Friends:

Thanks so very much for your generous donation of \$1492.00 and a truck load of toys to The Salvation Army's Christmas Campaign. These funds enabled us to assist over 650 families and over 750 children with toys, food, and clothing during December 2003.

Special thanks, also, for the use of the many tables for our Distribution Center, the manpower provided, and the assistance with food pick-ups from area schools. Your services to us proved invaluable!

May God Bless you and yours in 2004.

Sincerely,

Major Crystal Pruitt



MEMBER AGENCY
BERKELEY & MORGAN COUNTIES

Base Honor Guard Seeks Volunteers

By Senior Master Scott Wilson

Duty. Honor. Tradition.

These words hold many meanings, especially for members of the U.S. armed forces. For the members of the 167th Airlift Wing Base Honor Guard, however, they mean something extra.

The Base Honor Guard has wide variety of duties. These members represent the USAF, the Air National Guard and the 167th AW in numerous military and civilian functions, always looking sharp and representing the best the 167th AW has to offer.

What the Honor Guard does best is what most of the world never sees. The members attend many funerals, carefully folding the flags draped over caskets, compassionately handing our nation's greatest symbol to the families of those who have served.

The members of the Honor Guard take responsibility



for a five-county area in West Virginia and assist with areas in Maryland and Virginia. Most of all, this is an all-volunteer force. There are no requirements for anyone to participate as an Honor Guard member. The members are highly motivated and dedicated individuals who truly live by the motto of "To Honor With Dignity."

And motivated they need to be. Funerals are demanding emotionally and physically. They require determination, patience and an internal drive second to none. The members on the team carry a deep respect and appreciation for the military and for the men and women who serve now and served before them. The funeral detail is of the utmost importance to them.

Congress mandated in 2000 that all persons who served in the U.S. armed forces honorably are entitled to military funeral rights. If requested by the next of kin, the parent service must provide those rights. As a result of this, tasking on active duty service honor guards has increased drastically. The USAF Honor Guard at Bolling AFB, is responsible for our local area. The 167th AW has entered into an agreement with the USAF Honor Guard to assist with funeral de-



tails in the local area. At present, the 167th AW handles details for Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan, Hampshire and Hardy counties as well as assists with the immediate surrounding areas in Maryland and Virginia. Presently, law mandates the following minimum guidelines for funeral services:

Those serving on active duty, including current Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard members, require a 20-person detail including pallbearers, firing party, colors team, bugler and OIC/NCOIC.

For retirees, a 10-person detail is required. The pallbearers double as six members of the firing party. The other members are the bugler, two additional members of the firing party and the OIC/NCOIC.

For those who served in the armed forces without retiring, two members are required to fold the flag at graveside and present the flag to the family.

All Honor Guard members are trained on all aspects of the funeral detail. This allows them to be more versatile for the detail. They are required to attain a minimum of 40 hours initial training before they receive their uniform and are allowed to participate in the detail. Afterwards, they are required a minimum of 80 hours training per year to maintain their qualification. Upon completing their initial training, they are presented with a certificate and the Base Honor Guard Badge that they are permitted to display on their uniform at all times and for as long as they remain a part of the team. Members commit for a minimum of two years to the team but may remain longer.

The 167th AW Base Honor Guard is looking for new members. The goal is to have a minimum of 30 members; presently, there are 16 fully trained members and seven new volunteers. If you are interested in becoming part of the wing's great team, contact Capt. Tony Henry at ext. 5233 or Senior Master Sgt. Scott Wilson at ext. 5300. Come be a part of those who "Honor With Dignity." Be a Ceremonial Guardsman.



Military Retirees Get Pay Increase

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) — An estimated 150,000 military retirees will see an increase in their pay Feb. 2. The National Defense Authorization Act, enacted in November, significantly modified a long-standing law preventing retirees from receiving full-retired pay if they also received disability pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The new law allows concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability pay for retirees with more than 20 years of service and a disability rating of 50 percent or more. This restored pay will be phased in over a 10-year period that began Jan. 1.

Retirees are not required to take any action to receive the additional pay. Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials have already identified eligible retirees and began making adjustments to their military retired pay.

The first payments are due Feb. 2 for the law change that was effective Jan. 1. The additional funds also will be paid Feb. 2 based on entitlement for Jan. 1 to 31. The restored pay is paid on the same schedule as current military retired pay. Recurring payments will be made on the first business day of each month based on entitlement for the month before.

For the majority of military retirees, the additional money is taxable income and subject to federal tax withholding.

One category of military retirees who are eligible for additional funds but will not be paid Feb. 2, are those who receive retired pay based on a disability percentage instead of years of service. Further guidance is needed from the Department of Defense to determine how the law will be applied in these cases. Once guidance is received, payments will be made retroactive to Jan. 1. An estimated 2,800 military retirees fall into this category.

For more details regarding who is eligible for the restored pay and how payments will be made, visit www.dfas.mil and see the topics under "Retired and Annuitant Pay," or visit the myPay Web site at <http://mypay.dfas.mil>

Clarification Of Retro Civilian Pay Raise

The additional 2.1-percent pay raise for civilian employees authorized by the president Jan. 23 will be retroactive to Jan. 11. However, before it can take effect, an executive order must be issued addressing how the increase will be split between base and locality pay.

After the executive order is issued, the Office of Personnel Management will publish new salary tables based on that guidance. As in 2003, not all employees will receive the retroactive part of the pay increase at the same time. Because of transaction volume, payroll processing of this change must take place over the course of multiple paydays.

For the latest updates, go to the DFAS Web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/>.

Hawaii Duty



Unit member Staff Sgt. Delphia Rogers (below) is shown being promoted at a ceremony held at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Members of the 167th Supply, Transportation Management, Personnel, Services and Transportation Squadrons recently returned from the temporary deployment in support of the 154th Fighter Wing of the Hawaii Air National Guard, located at Hickam.

(Photos by Staff Sgt. Emily Beightol)



Officials Prohibit War Trophies

Service members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are prohibited from taking to the United States any items that were formerly in the possession of the enemy. With about 140,000 American service members scheduled to rotate out of Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Central Command officials said service members couldn't bring home weapons, ammunition or other prohibited items. Under no circumstances can individuals take as a souvenir an object that was formerly in the enemy's possession. While in Iraq, unit commanders will brief service members on the policy before leaving the AOR.



Air National Guard
Americans At Their Best.